

Charged!

Automakers race to build plug-in cars.

No matter how much Jay Friedland drives his car, he never has to buy gas. Instead, the California resident plugs his Toyota RAV4 EV in to a regular electrical outlet in his garage each night. By morning, the vehicle is recharged and ready to roll.

Friedland owns a **plug-in car**. That is a car that runs on electricity. There are two kinds of plug-in cars. All-electric cars, such as Friedland's, run entirely on electricity. Others are called **plug-in hybrids**. Those cars are powered by both gasoline and electricity. (See "Plug It In.")

There aren't many plug-in vehicles today. However, nine auto companies recently announced plans to build plug-in cars by 2013.

The Chevrolet Volt will zoom onto the scene in 2010. The U.S.-made vehicle is a plug-in hybrid. It will be able to travel up to 40 miles on electricity. Then the car will use its gas engine to keep running.

The Asian car company Mitsubishi also plans to sell its plug-in vehicle by late 2010. The i MiEV is an all-electric vehicle.



This car can be plugged in to a regular outlet.

Plug-in cars use less gas than regular cars. Some vehicles, such as all-electric cars, use no gas at all. Plug-in cars release less harmful materials into Earth's atmosphere. Those materials include **carbon dioxide**. That is a gas that can harm the planet by making it warmer.

Helping the environment is one reason Friedland drives a plug-in car. He is the director of Plug In America. That is a group that encourages people to drive plug-in vehicles to help the environment.

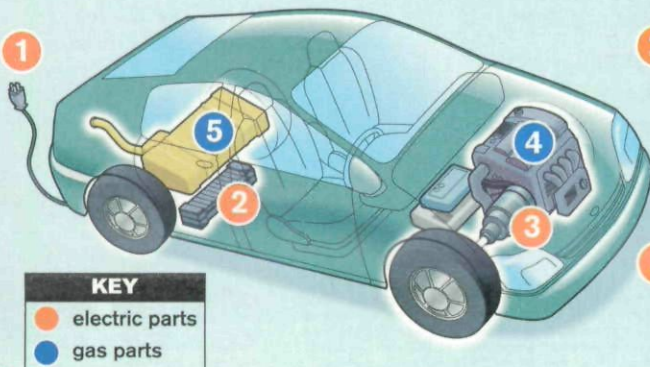
"It's incredibly fun to drive on electricity," he told *WR News*. "And it's great to know that every time you're driving, you're not hurting the Earth." **WR**



THINK ABOUT IT: What are some ways drivers of gas-powered cars could also help Earth?

Plug It In

How does a plug-in car zoom to life? Take a peek under the hood of this plug-in hybrid to find out.



1 Power Cord

A plug-in hybrid is plugged in to a regular outlet so the battery can charge.

2 Battery

The battery stores the energy used to run the electric motor.

3 Electric Motor

The electric motor supplies the car's power. It makes the car run.

4 Gas Engine

If the battery runs out, the gas engine kicks in to keep the car going.

5 Gas Tank

Fuel stored here runs the gas engine.

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